

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG



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**HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY
FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT**

GRADUATION PAPER

**A STUDY ON ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS
WHICH CONTAIN WORDS DENOTING TIME**

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Class:

NA1202

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HAI PHONG - 2012

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG

Nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp

Sinh viên:Mã số:.....

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1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp

(về lý luận, thực tiễn, các số liệu cần tính toán và các bản vẽ).

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2. Các số liệu cần thiết để thiết kế, tính toán.

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3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp.

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Hải Phòng, ngày tháng năm 2012

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2. Cho điểm của người chấm phản
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Người chấm phản biện

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Pham Thi Tuoi

TABLE OF CONTENT

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. Rationale	1
2. Aims of the study.....	2
3. Scope of the study	2
4. Design of the study	2
PART TWO: DEVELOPMENT	4
Chapter 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.....	4
1. Some Related Theoretical definitions	4
<i>1.1. Idioms.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>1.2. Time</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>1.3. Idioms which contain Words Denoting Time (IT).....</i>	<i>5</i>
2. Principal features of idioms	6
<i>2.1. Structural Stability.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>2.2. Semantic Opacity.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>2.3. Cultural Features.....</i>	<i>8</i>
3. Overview of Phrase, Clause and Sentence Structures	9
<i>3.1. Phrase</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>3.2. Clause</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>3.3. Sentence</i>	<i>10</i>
Chapter 2: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES	12
1. Research Design	12
2. Research Methods.....	12
3. Research Procedures	12
4. Description of the Sample	12
5. Data Collection.....	13
6. Reliability and Validity	13
Chapter 3: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	15
1. Syntactic Features.....	15
<i>1.1. IT with Noun Phrase Structure (42).....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>1.2. IT with Verb Phrase Structure (70).....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>1.3. IT with Adjective Phrase Structure (21) (7E + 14V).....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>1.4. IT with Prepositional Phrase Structure (12).....</i>	<i>18</i>

1.5. <i>IT with Adverb Phrase Structure (15)</i>	19
1.6. <i>IT with Sentence Structure (27)</i>	19
1.7. <i>IT with Parallel Structure (16) (3E + 13V)</i>	20
1.8. <i>Similarities and Differences of Syntactic Features of English and Vietnamese Idioms which contain Words Denoting Time</i>	21
<i>a. Similarities</i>	21
<i>b. Differences</i>	22
2. Semantic Features	22
2.1. <i>Advice (3E + 13V)</i>	23
2.2. <i>Characteristics (15E + 12V)</i>	23
2.3. <i>Frequency (6E + 3V)</i>	24
2.4. <i>Activities (23E + 25V)</i>	24
2.5. <i>Mood (15E + 5V)</i>	24
2.6. <i>Objects (10E + 4V)</i>	25
2.7. <i>Opinion (9E + 15V)</i>	25
2.8. <i>Physical state (9E + 2V)</i>	25
2.9. <i>Time (20E + 10V)</i>	25
2.10. <i>Weather (3E + 1V)</i>	26
2.11. <i>Similarities and Differences of Semantic Features of English and Vietnamese Idioms which contain Words Denoting Time</i>	27
<i>a. Similarities</i>	27
<i>b. Differences</i>	28
3. Difficulties students encounter when learning idioms	29
3.1. <i>Idioms are not literal</i>	29
3.2. <i>It's difficult to use idioms correctively</i>	29
3.3. <i>Teaching materials are not much available</i>	29
4. Some suggested solutions	30
4.1. <i>Learn idioms in context, never in isolation</i>	30
4.2. <i>Create conversations using idioms</i>	30
4.3. <i>Keep an 'Idioms' diary</i>	30
4.4. <i>Amount: Not Too Many At Once</i>	30

4.5. <i>A lot of idioms can be found in songs</i>	30
4.6. <i>Themes: Related To Your Topic</i>	30
4.7. <i>Try to see the idiom in your mind</i>	31
PART III: CONCLUSION	32
1. Summary of the study	32
2. Limitation of the study	34
3. Suggestions for further studies	34
APPENDIX 1: LIST OF ENGLISH IT	36
APPENDIX 2: LIST OF VIETNAMESE IT	50
REFERENCES	55

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

Nowadays, together with growth of global connection, English language has become more and more important. Especially in Vietnam, learning English seems to be one of main tasks of students. In this process, they encounter a large number of difficulties. One of them is understanding idioms.

Every country or nation has got their own idioms that are specific to their own culture, while many idioms have synonyms in several countries, what refers to the equal shared human nature in many cultures. Learning the specific idioms related to a certain culture helps you learn more about the history, customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of it.

Idioms make a language more interesting and vibrant. Mastering idioms means you are using and understanding the language more like a native speaker would. As for English learners, effectively communicating with others especially native speakers is the ultimate goal. And we cannot reach that goal if we pay little or even no attention to the idioms. So grasping the use of idioms is an essential part of English study.

Idioms are everywhere. You will find them in newspapers, books, magazines, on the radio, on the television, in everyday conversation and at work.

Understanding the meaning of idioms in general and idioms which contain words denoting time (IT) in particular is the first difficulty of learners and the second one is the way of using idioms in each specific context. Moreover studying idioms which contain words denoting time is a part of language learning and it can help learners use language more naturally and effectively.

I am interested in the way English and Vietnamese people use idioms to satisfy their own need in daily communication. Here and there, there are several studies on idioms with certain linguistic units. However, in range of Hai Phong Private University, there is no study of idioms containing words indicating time. Thus, the topic “*A study on English and Vietnamese idioms which contain words denoting time*” is chosen for my thesis. Hopefully, the result of the study will be useful for learners of English and contribute a small

part into the teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Vietnam, especially at Hai Phong Private University.

2. Aims of the study

This study is carried out with the hope to reach some aims at:

- Making a systematic description of English idioms containing words denoting time and Vietnamese idioms containing words denoting time.
- Identifying the similarities and differences between English IT and Vietnamese IT in terms of the syntactic and semantic features.

3. Scope of the study

This research is restricted to idioms containing words denoting time. It is focused on making a contrastive analysis in terms of syntactic and semantic aspects. Syntactically, my study will investigate into IT with noun phrase structure, verb phrase structure, adjective phrase structure, prepositional phrase structure, adverb phrase structure and sentence structure. In aspect of semantic opacity, an investigation into Advice, Characteristics (Human characteristics and characteristics of objects), Frequency, Activities, Mood, Objects, Opinion, Physical state, Time, Weather will be carried out.

4. Design of the study

For a clear organization, my graduation paper is divided into three main parts in which the second is the most important part:

- **Part 1** is entitled the “**Introduction**” where rationale, aim, scope and design of the thesis are presented.
- **Part 2** is the “**Development**” which consists of three chapters:
 - + **Chapter 1:** Theoretical Background, including four main small parts:
 - * Some Related Theoretical definitions of idioms, time and IDWT.
 - * Principal features of idioms
 - * Overview of Phrase, Clause and Sentence Structures
 - * Overview of Semantic Opacity and Semantic Field
 - + **Chapter 2:** Methodology and Procedure, dealing with research design, research methods, research procedures, description of the sample, data collection, reliability and validity.
 - + **Chapter 3:** Finding and discussion, focusing on four main matters:

- * Similarities and differences of syntactic features of English and Vietnamese IT.

- * Similarities and differences of semantic features of English and Vietnamese IT.

- * Difficulties students encounter when learning idioms

- * Some suggested solutions

- **Part 3** is the “**Conclusion**” with the aim of performing the following ideas:

- * Summary of the study: summarizing what have been discussed in previous parts.

- * Limitation of the study

- * Suggestions for further studies

PART TWO: DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Some Related Theoretical definitions

1.1. Idioms

"If natural language had been designed by a logician, idioms would not exist."

(Philip Johnson-Laird, 1993)

Idioms exist in probably all languages - the definition of idiom is a construction whose meaning cannot be logically deduced from the words that make it up. Chiefly, their importance is that they are a major area of difficulty for non-native learners; although illogical, idioms have to be learned because they are used a lot in conversational native English speech.

According to Wikipedia <http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idiom>, "An idiom is a word or phrase which means something different from what it says - it is usually a metaphor. Idioms are common phrases or terms whose meaning are not real, but can be understood by their popular use."

Makkai, in his work (*Idiom structure in English* (1972 - page 121), defines an idiom as "any polylexonic lexeme made up of more than one minimal free form of word (as defined by morphotactic criteria), each lexeme of which can occur in other environments as the realization of a monoloxonic lexeme".

It can be seen that idioms can mean something different from what the words mean. Generally speaking, most of the authors showed that idiom is a group of words whose meaning cannot be understood from the meanings of individual words in it.

Hoang Van Hanh defines in "*Ke Chuyen Thanh Ngu, Tuc Ngu*" (2002) that idioms are set expressions which are stable in their morpho – structure, complete and figurative in their meaning, used widely in daily communication, especially in speech.

All things considered, idioms are sayings that reflect accumulated human experiences and are built on frequently occurring situations, which demonstrate human behavior, social traits, certain habits or tradition in a country. They almost represent life lessons and are a heritage of those

accumulated events that make up the conscious of a nation or humankind in general.

1.2. Time

Time is what clocks measure. The three key features of time are that it orders events in the sense of placing events in sequence one after the other; it specifies how long any event lasts; and it specifies when events occur.



The concept of time is self-evident. An hour consists of a certain number of minutes, a day of hours and a year of days. But we rarely think about the fundamental nature of time.

In accordance with Wikipedia(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time), time is a dimension in which events can be ordered from the past through the present into the future, and also the measure of durations of events and the intervals between them. Time has long been a major subject of study in religion, philosophy, and science, but defining it in a manner applicable to all fields without circularity has consistently eluded scholars. Nevertheless, diverse fields such as business, industry, sports, the sciences, music, dance, and the live theater all incorporate some notion of time into their respective measuring systems. Some simple, relatively uncontroversial definitions of time include "time is what clocks measure" and "time is what keeps everything from happening at once".

It can be pointed out that time is an observed phenomenon, by means of which human beings sense and record changes in the environment and in the universe. A literal definition is elusive. Time has been called an illusion, a dimension, a smooth-flowing continuum, and an expression of separation among events that occur in the same physical location.

1.3. Idioms which contain Words Denoting Time (IT)

The followings classifications and definitions are the basic background of my graduation thesis:

English idioms were classified into several special groups including numbers, time, body parts, animals and briefly listed by Seidl & Mordie in "*Pocket English Idioms*" (1993). According to them, IT is a special kind of idioms in which time terms with special meanings are considered key words. In other words, IT are one specific group of idioms that demonstrate the way

each person time using terms in set expressions and how they associate these terms with other things in the world.

Pham Vu Lua Ha in “*Mastering English Idioms*” (1996) mention idioms with key words from special categories such as idioms involving animals, colors, numbers, size, body parts, time,...He defines IT as idioms which contain time words or terms as key words or main components.

2. Principal features of idioms

2.1. Structural Stability

Idioms present a great variety of structures and combinations that are mostly unchangeable and often not logical and may not follow basic rules of grammar.

Idioms can be quite clear (*Đi đêm về hôm, Daylight robbery, Day by day, Be on time*) or pretty unclear (*A dog's life, Be pressed for time, Make a day of it*). Some idioms have proper names in them (*The New York minute*); Some idioms have the comparison (*Úỡ như điều hâu tháng chạp*).

The components in idioms can neither be added nor substituted. They cannot be changed or varied in the way literal expressions are normally varied both in speech and writing.

In terms of structure, an idiom can have a regular structure, an irregular or even a grammatically incorrect structure. For the first type, they have common forms but there is no connection between the meaning of each component and that of the whole unit, for example *It's just not my day* (Nothing is going right for me today). Therefore, you cannot guess the meaning of the idioms without learning them before. The second group takes into account ones which have unconventional forms but their meaning can be worked out through the meaning of individual words. Take “*It's early days yet*” as a typical illustration; since the idiom is irregular and illogical in terms of grammatical structure. According to the rule of language, “It” is singular and therefore “day” must be singular, too. However, in this case, the idiom does not need to obey grammatical rule to make sense. “*It's early days yet*” can still be understood that “It too soon to say/ decide”. In the last group, grammatically incorrect, both its form and meaning are irregular. The structure is grammatically inaccurate and the meaning is not precisely

expressed by gathering the meaning of each member-word, for example “*It’s ages since we met*” (singular with a plural noun). In English, normally a structure like this is acknowledged once in a blue moon since adjectives never come after prepositions individually. As an idiom, however, the case is accepted.

It is pointless to ask why idioms have such unusual structure or choice of words, or why they don't follow basic grammar rules. We just accept as fact that idioms are a difficult peculiarity of English.

Most idioms are unique and fixed in their grammatical structure. However, there are some changes in nouns, pronouns or in the verb tenses that can be made to an idiom.

Adjectives and adverbs can also be added to an idiomatic phrase. Or people can change the subject of the idiom, for example: *I wasn’t born yesterday* (I am experienced; knowledgeable in the ways of the world), when applying with another girl can be changed into “*she wasn’t born yesterday*”.

It is for these reasons that it is sometimes difficult to isolate the actual idiomatic expression and then find it in a dictionary of idioms.

To sum up, in terms of syntactic feature, firstly, an idiom is a set – expression. We cannot make any changes without losing the idiomatic meaning. Secondly, idioms may take many different forms or structures. Mentioning to structure, an idiom can have a regular structure, an irregular or even a grammatically incorrect structure.

2.2. Semantic Opacity

Idioms, as means of non-literal language, have a great extent use in everyday language. They carry a metaphorical sense that makes their comprehension difficult, since their meaning cannot be deduced from the meaning of their constituent parts. Their meanings are more than simply the sum of their individual parts.

In terms of opacity, Idioms are categorized in a continuum from transparent to opaque called the spectrum of idiomacity. Therefore, idioms can be divided into: Transparent-Opaque Idioms including:

a) Transparent Idioms

These idioms have a very close meaning to that of the literal one. Hence, transparent idioms are usually not difficult to understand and translate,

because their meanings can be easily inferred from the meanings of their constituents, both components have a direct meaning but the combination acquires figurative sense. Phraseological combinations are commonly included in this category.

E.g. *Time is money...*

b) Semi - Transparent Idioms

The idiom usually carries a metaphorical sense that could not be known only through common use. i.e., the meaning of its parts has a little role to play in understanding the entire meaning.

E.g. *A race against time*

c) Semi-Opaque Idioms

This type refers to those idioms in which the figurative meaning is not joined to that of the constituent words of the idiom. Thus, the expression is separated into two parts; a part with a literal meaning, and another part with a figurative sense. Phraseological unities belong to this category.

d) Opaque Idioms

Opaque idioms are the most difficult type of idioms, because the meaning of the idiom is never that of the sum of the literal meanings of its parts. So, it would be impossible to infer the actual meaning of the idiom from the meanings of its components, because of the presence of items having cultural references. These culture-specific items have a great influence on the comprehensibility of idiomatic expressions.

Generally speaking, an idiom is a kind of lexical unit in which the whole meaning of the expression is not apparent from the meanings of its components.

2.3. Cultural Features

Every language has its own vivid and colorful idioms which were created by people when using for a long time and has deep nation history and local color.

Maalej (2005) identifies idioms as culture-specific aspect of a particular language, i.e., the non-existence of a direct one to one correspondence between a target language and a source language is the result of culture-specific idioms. Native language idioms can blend ethno-specific concepts pertaining to the world view of its speakers, to their national

character, as well as their traditional social relations, thus becoming an embodiment of national dispositions and spiritual values.

As we all know, language is closely related to culture and can be said as a part of culture. From a dynamic view, language and culture interact with each other and shape each other. Language is the carrier of culture which in turn is the content of language. We can dig out cultural features from language and explain language phenomena with culture.

Idioms as a special form of language exist in both of them and carry a large amount of cultural information such as history, geography, religion, custom, nationality psychology, thought pattern..., and therefore are closely related to culture. They are the heritage of history and product of cultural evolution. Consequently, we can know much about culture through studying idioms and in turn get better understanding of idioms by learning the cultural background behind them.

3. Overview of Phrase, Clause and Sentence Structures

3.1. Phrase

A phrase is a group of words acting as a single part of speech and not containing both a subject and a verb. It is a part of a sentence, and does not express a complete thought.

For example, the phrases in the first two sentences of this page are italicized. In which the first sentence contains five phrases: "*of words,*" "*acting as a single part of speech,*" "*as a single part,*" "*of speech,*" and "*not containing both a subject and a verb.*" Except for the phrase beginning with *as*, all the phrases are acting as adjectives. The phrase beginning with *as* is adverbial.

According to dictionary, a group of words, which makes sense, but not complete sense, is called a Phrase. It is a group of related words without a Subject and a Verb.

In this study, I focus on verb, noun, adjective, adverb and prepositional phrases.

3.2. Clause

A group of words containing a subject and a predicate and forming part of a compound or complex sentence(www.wordnik.com/words/clause).

In accordance with Wikipedia(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clause), a clause is the smallest grammatical unit that can express a complete proposition. A typical clause in English contains minimally a subject and a predicate. In other languages, the subject is often omitted if it is retrievable from context. A simple sentence usually consists of a single finite clause with a finite verb that is independent. More complex sentences may contain multiple clauses. Main clause (= matrix clauses, independent clauses) are those that could stand as a sentence by themselves. Subordinate clauses (= embedded clauses, dependent clauses) are those that would be awkward or nonsensical if used alone.

3.3. Sentence

We put a group of words together to form a sentence. But not all sentences are made up of a group of words. A sentence must have a main clause or more than one main clause. There are as many clauses as there are finite verbs in a sentence. (The finite verb is the verb that changes with the person or number of the subject.)

A sentence:

- Begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop (period), a question mark, or an exclamation mark.
- Has to meet the requirements for a sentence such as being able to stand by itself, and making sense. To ensure it does, the following point is important: The subject-predicate agreement must be observed
- Expresses a complete idea as a statement or asks a question.
- May be a word or short sentence used to express a strong feeling such as surprise, excitement or anger.
- Can also be a combination of two or more clauses. One of the clauses must be an independent clause, and the other clause can either be an independent or a dependent clause. It is important to know about clauses in order to construct complete sentences.
- Has two parts: a subject (noun or pronoun) and a predicate (a verb or a phrase) as explained below.

- Can be one word or two words, and as long it can stand alone, its meaning is clear, and does make sense, it is accepted as a sentence.
- Can be joined to another sentence without the use of a conjunction. We do it by using the present participle which is the –ing form of a verb: look – looking.
- Can be made a negative sentence using –ing form of the verb, we put not in front of it.

A sentence is the basic unit of language which expresses a complete thought. It is a group of words that are put together to mean something and does this by following the grammatical rules of syntax.

A complete sentence has at least a subject and a main verb to state (declare) a complete thought. Short example: *Walker walks*. A subject is the noun that is doing the main verb. The main verb is the verb that the subject is doing. In English and many other languages, the first word of a written sentence has a capital letter. At the end of the sentence there is a full stop or full point.

Chapter 2: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

1. Research Design

With the aim of reaching the goal of the study, quantitative and qualitative approaches will be carried out. Then, the collected data will be qualitatively analyzed, compared and generalized to highlight their characteristics.

2. Research Methods

The meanings of idioms, in accordance with their syntactic and semantic features, are described and interpreted with means of descriptive method and a powerful source of dictionaries and document.

What's more, the contrastive method is applied to draw out the similarities as well as differences of English and Vietnamese IT according to their syntactic and semantic features.

Statistical and observational methods are also used to find out essential findings.

3. Research Procedures

- Compiling English and Vietnamese idioms which contain words denoting time from the sources of books, dictionaries and internet. At the same time, collecting examples in which they are used.

- Analyzing and categorizing English and Vietnamese IT according to their syntactic and semantic features.

- Figuring out the similarities and the differences in terms of the syntactic and semantic features of English and Vietnamese IT.

- Putting forward some implications for teaching and learning idioms as well as making some suggestions for further research.

- Showing study limitations.

- Closing the study with Appendices and References.

4. Description of the Sample

- Criteria to choose the samples:

- + Possess characteristics of idioms (As stated in Section 2 of Chapter 1)

- + Contain words denoting time according to the below table

	ENGLISH	VIETNAMESE
Words denoting period of time	Second, minute, hour, day, week, month, year, age, life, morning, afternoon, night, midnight	Giây, phút, giờ, ngày, tuần, tháng, năm, đời, sáng, trưa, tối, nửa đêm
Words denoting time point	Weekend, past, future, time, before, after, yesterday, today, tomorrow	Cuối tuần, quá khứ, tương lai, thời gian, trước, sau, hôm qua, hôm nay, ngày mai
Words denoting days in a week	Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday	Chủ nhật, Thứ Hai, Thứ Ba, Thứ Tư, Thứ Năm, Thứ Sáu, Thứ Bảy
Words denoting seasons in a year	Spring, Summer, Autumn (Fall), Winter	Mùa xuân, mùa hạ, mùa thu, mùa đông

- With such set criteria I collected English and Vietnamese idioms from many books, dictionaries, stories and the internet. Firstly, I start collecting idioms in the book which got more IT than other ones. When getting a list of idioms, I was able to collect a total of 203 English and Vietnamese IT for building up my corpus which consists of 113 English idioms and 90 Vietnamese ones.

5. Data Collection

The number of samples being investigated in the research is 113 in English and 90 in Vietnamese based on the criteria in the Section 3.4. The idioms are collected from books, dictionaries, and internet. All the collected idioms will be classified and put together in categories of different features of syntactic and semantic.

6. Reliability and Validity

With regard to reliability, the material for this study, as mentioned above, is carefully compiled from a powerful source of books, dictionaries, and popular websites. In addition, all information is quoted in this thesis

without any differences or changes from the original materials. Therefore, both the material and the background for the study are surely worthy of reliance. The results and findings in this thesis are obviously summed up from the material analysis without any prejudices or preconceptions.

As regards validity, the whole collected English and Vietnamese idioms meet all required criteria. The samples of the study are made from English and Vietnamese idioms which are taken from books, dictionaries, and in the internet. What's more, in order to make sure idioms' origin and avoid the translated idioms, after being extracted from bilingual dictionaries, they will be carefully checked up in the monolingual dictionaries.

Chapter 3: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Syntactic Features

1.1. IT with Noun Phrase Structure (42)

English ITare relatively numeral over the Vietnamese ones. The general patterns of English include: *(Article) + N/NP*, *(Article) + N/NP + Prep*, *(Article) + N + N*, *(Article) + adj + N/NP*, *Numeral + N + Numeral + N*, *One's + N*. Meanwhile the Vietnamese patterns containing Noun Phrase are *(Article) + adj + N/NP*, *Numeral + N + Numeral + N*, *N/NP + V*, *N/NP + V*.

<i>(Article) + N/NP: (3 E)</i>	
A dog's life, Daydream, Day-tripper	

<i>(Article) + N/NP + Prep: (8 E)</i>	
A race against time, Time to call it a day, Order of the day, A blast from the past...	

<i>(Article) + N + N: (10 E)</i>	
Twilight years, The New York minute, Sunday driver, Day person...	

<i>(Article) + Adj + N/NP: (9 E & 1V)</i>	
A black day, A dirty weekend, The big time...	Bách niên giai lão

<i>Numeral + N + Numeral + N: (3V & 1E)</i>	
One day	Năm thì mười họa, Một sớm một chiều...

<i>One's + N: (3E)</i>	
Not one's day, Donkey's years, One's sunset years	

<i>N/NP + V, N/NP + V: (4V)</i>	
	Mùa hạ buồn bông, mùa đông buồn quạt, Sông có khúc, người có lúc, Tháng ba đau máu, tháng sáu đau lưng...

1.2. IT with Verb Phrase Structure (70)

There is a surprisingly big amount of patterns in Verb structure, both in English and Vietnamese idioms. English idioms mainly appear in the patterns: *V + (Article) + N/NP (+N), V + Prep, V + N/NP + Prep, V + N/NP + N/NP, V + Prep + N/NP, V + N + Prep + N, Prep + V, Prep + V, (Prep + V)*. Vietnamese ones occupy a large number in this form and they are in the patterns: *V + (Article) + N/NP (+N), V + Prep, V + N/NP + Prep, V + Prep + N/NP, Prep + V, Prep + V, (Prep + V)*.

<i>V + (Article) + N/NP (+N): (16E + 13V)</i>	
Come Monday, Burn the midnight oil, Carry the day, Be no spring chicken, Make good time, Make somebody's day...	Ăn bữa sáng lo bữa tối, Ăn đời ở kiếp, Đi đêm về hôm, Thua keo trước được keo sau...

<i>V + Prep: (1E + 9V)</i>	
Spring up	Nói trước quên sau, Ăn theo thưở, ở theo thời...

<i>V + N/NP + Prep: (9E + 3V)</i>	
Get/have your day in court, Need something yesterday, Pass the time of day (with someone), Have time on your hands/time to kill...	Kiểm củi ba năm thiêu một giờ...

<i>V + N/NP + N/NP: (1E)</i>	
Not give anyone the time of day	

<i>V + Prep + N/NP: (7E + 3V)</i>	
Spring into action, Spring to someone's defense...	Chạy đua với thời gian, Mơ giữa ban ngày...

<i>V + N + Prep + N: (4E + 1V)</i>	
Spring something on someone, Put years on somebody, Save (something) for a rainy day...	Lấy đêm làm ngày

<i>Prep + V, Prep + V, (Prep + V): (3V)</i>	
	Sáng rửa cửa, trưa mài đục, tối giục nhau về, Nay gánh mai đội, Nay đội mai trông

1.3. IT with Adjective Phrase Structure (21) (7E + 14V)

The basic patterns in the Adjective phrase structure: *(Be) + comparative form + N/NP, Numeral + N + Adj, Adj + Adj, Adj + N/NP, Adj + Prep* are found in the verb phrase structure of Vietnamese idioms whereas English ones only appear in two patterns: *(Be) + comparative form + N/NP, Adj + Prep + N*.

<i>(Be) + comparative form + N/NP: (6E + 7V)</i>	
Be as clear/plain as day, Different as night and day...	Ủ rũ như điều hâu tháng chạp, Rõ như ban ngày, Tối như đêm ba mươi...

<i>Adj + Prep + N: (1E)</i>	
Pressed for time	

<i>Numeral + N + Adj: (1V)</i>	
	Ba ngày béo bảy ngày gầy

<i>Adj + Adj: (2V)</i>	
	Chậm mà chắc, Chẳng chóng thì chày

<i>Adj + N/NP: (3V)</i>	
	Giàu chiều hôm, khó sớm mai, Sớm một ngày hay một chước, Khôn ba năm đại một giờ

<i>Adj + Prep: (1V)</i>	
	Khổ trước sướng sau

1.4. IT with Prepositional Phrase Structure (12)

Prep + N/NP + (N/NP), *Prep + Prep + N/NP*, *Prep + Adj + N* are the common structures of English idioms adjective phrase. Vietnamese ones only appear in one pattern in this form and it is: *Prep + N/NP + (N/NP)*

<i>Prep + N/NP + (N/NP): (6E + 1V)</i>	
In the cold light of day, In an age of years, In years...	Giữa ban ngày ban mặt

<i>Prep + Prep + N/NP: (3E)</i>	
All the livelong day, All in a day's work, Late in the day	

<i>Prep + Adj + N: (2E)</i>	
Of mature years, In broad daylight	

1.5. IT with Adverb Phrase Structure (15)

The basic patterns in the verb phrase structure: *Adv + Adj*, *Adv + V*, *Adv + N* are found in the verb phrase structure of Vietnamese idioms whereas English ones only appear one pattern: *Adv + N*

<i>Adv + Adj: (3V)</i>	
	Trước sau như một, Trước có vụng rồi sau mới khéo, Càng mong lại càng lâu

<i>Adv + V: (2V)</i>	
	Ba lần đo, một lần cắt, Buổi tối nghĩ sai, sáng mai nghĩ đúng

<i>Adv + N: (7E + 3V)</i>	
Ahead of time, Abreast the times, Behind the times	Lâu ngày dày kén, Sớm đào tối mạn...

1.6. IT with Sentence Structure (27)

Some English idioms in the patterns: *Subject + V + Object*, *Subject + V + Complement (N/Adj)*, *There + be + N*, *Subject + V + Conjunction*, *Subject + V + Adv*, *Subject (+ V) + Adv + V + N*. At the same time, Vietnamese idioms appear in some patterns: *Subject + V + Object*, *Subject + V + Conjunction*, *Subject + V + Adv*, *Subject (+ V) + Adv + V + N*.

<i>Subject + V + Object: (1E + 6V)</i>	
One swallow doesn't make a summer	Áo gấm đi đêm, Hoa có thời gái có thì, Áo bào gặp ngày hội...

<i>Subject + V + Complement (N/Adj): (8E)</i>	
Every dog has its day, I wasn't born yesterday, Time is money, The time is ripe, That'll be the day...	

<i>There + be + N: (2E)</i>	
There's one born every minute, There aren't enough hours in the day	
<i>Subject + V + Conjunction: (1E + 2V)</i>	
Time is on your side	Việc hôm nay chớ để ngày mai, Xuân thu nhị kỳ
<i>Subject + V + Adv: (2V)</i>	
	Chớ dại có mùa, người dại quanh năm, Ai giàu ba họ, ai khó ba đời

<i>Subject (+ V) + Adv + V + N: (4V + 1E)</i>	
An apple a day keeps the doctor away	Kiến tha lâu cũng có ngày đầy tổ, Cóc chết ba năm quay đầu về núi, Lửa gần rơm lâu ngày cũng bén, ...

1.7. IT with Parallel Structure (16) (3E + 13V)

English idioms which are found in this pattern: *Day in and day out/day in, day out, Other times, other manner, Year in, year out*

Vietnamese IT occupy a large number in this form and they are in the patterns: *Mỗi thời, mỗi cách, Mùa đông tháng giá, Mưa lâu thấm đất, Năm cùng tháng tận, Năm hết tết đến...*

Structure	English IT		Vietnamese IT	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>Noun Phrase Structure</i>	34	30 %	8	9 %
<i>Verb Phrase Structure</i>	38	32 %	32	36 %
<i>Adjective Phrase</i>	7	6 %	14	15 %
<i>Prepositional Phrase</i>	11	10 %	1	1 %
<i>Adverb Phrase</i>	7	6 %	8	9 %
<i>Sentence Structure</i>	13	11 %	14	16 %
<i>Parallel Structure</i>	3	3 %	13	14 %
<i>Total</i>	113	100 %	90	100 %

Table 1: Statistical analyze of syntactic features of English and Vietnamese IT

To make the comparison clearer and lively, let us take a look at the following charts.

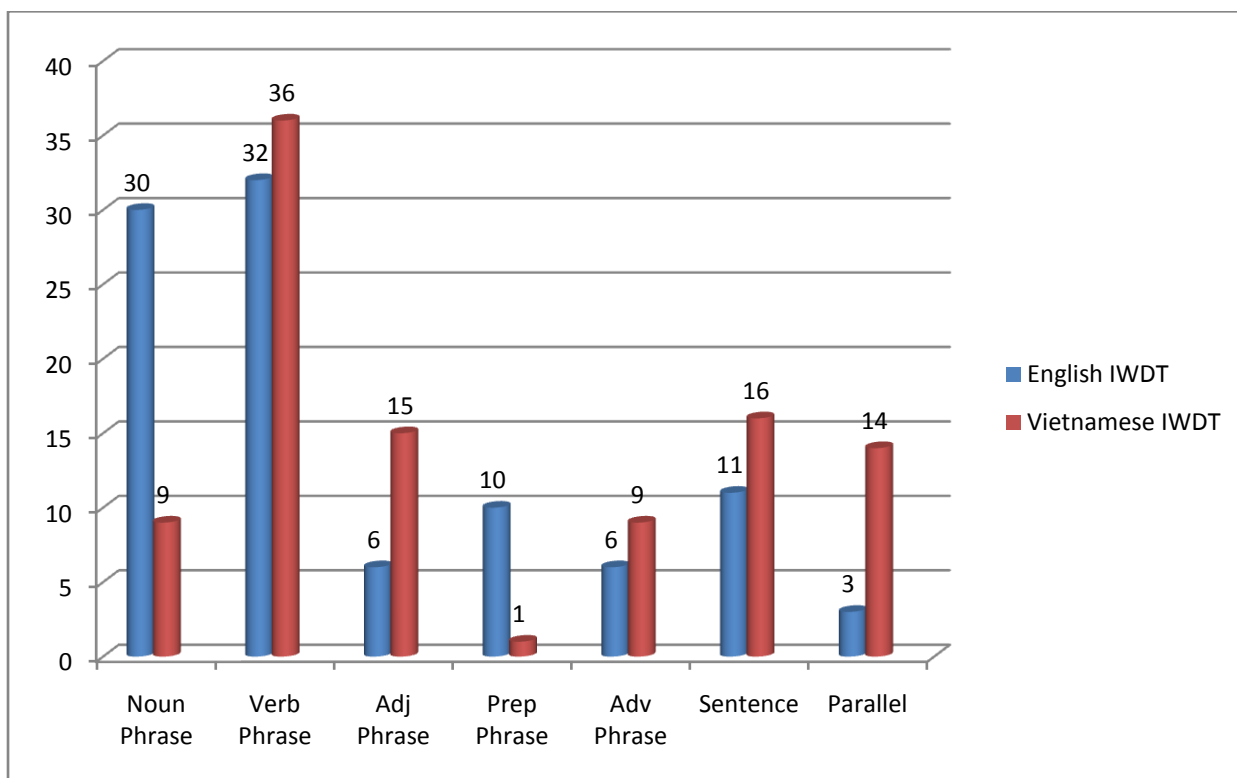


Chart 1: Rate of syntactic features of English and Vietnamese IT

1.8. Similarities and Differences of Syntactic Features of English and Vietnamese Idioms which contain Words Denoting Time

a. Similarities

This section has given out a generalization of the syntactic structures of idioms which contain words denoting time in English and in Vietnamese. The syntactic features of idioms are shown in the table 1 where all the features have been sorted into common patterns.

The findings reveal some common characteristics between English and Vietnamese IT.

Firstly, according to what we can see from the above chart, the verb phrase plays the most important role in both two languages' idioms (32% in English IT and 36% in Vietnamese ones). In detailed, *V + (Article) + N/NP (+N)* is preferred by both of them when there are the most idioms belonging to it (16 English IT and 13 Vietnamese IT). It's not difficult to understand the importance of Verb phrase structure in idioms. The two languages find out the

common convenience in using verb phrase at their basic aim of advising and expressing experience. Thus, for this reason, verb phrase has strong effect on both English and Vietnamese IT.

Secondly, among 7 structures, sentence ones account for the relatively equal rate in both English and Vietnamese idioms which contain words denoting time. In terms of sentence structures, English IT rate is 11% and Vietnamese ones' is 16%. Sentence structure is also a popular type of idioms in these two languages. The possible reason is that sentence is easy for idioms pointing out the object of verb where there is the appearance of both object and its action.

Both in English and Vietnamese, complements following a verb can be realized by an adjective, adjective phrase, a noun, a noun phrase; objects can be a noun or noun phrase, etc.

In conclusion, these two nations' idioms find their agreement on number of verb phrase and sentence structures.

b. Differences

Data in the above table shows clearly the differences in same aspects of syntactic features between English and Vietnamese IT.

With regards of noun phrase structures, English idioms possess a big number of 30%. At the same time, that number of Vietnamese ones is just 9%. This particular difference may be caused by the difference in using words of two cultures. The English people have a preference in utilizing noun to refer object while Vietnamese people don't have that habit.

What's more, among the samples investigated, we see that there are 3% of English idioms in the parallel structures 14% of Vietnamese IT appear in this section. The considerable reason of this is the frequency of using this type of structure for the desire of alliteration and rhythm in order to make speeches smoother of Vietnamese people.

One more difference is that to make speeches smoother and easier to remember, lots of Vietnamese IT use the repetition of sound and rhythm which cannot be found out in English ones.

2. Semantic Features

As mentioned in previous chapters, the meaning of idioms cannot be inferred from the meanings of individual words, so it is the semantic opacity

of idioms that makes the learners or translators of English as well as Vietnamese get into a lot of troubles. The degree of the troubles depends on the degree of semantic opacity of idioms.

There are many aspects in the semantic field, both in English and Vietnamese idioms but we only investigate some main aspects including: Advice, Characteristics (Human characteristics and characteristics of objects), Frequency, Activities, Mood, Objects, Opinion, Physical state, Time, Weather.

2.1. Advice (3E + 13V)

In English: *Better late than never, An apple a day keeps the doctor away, Time is money...*

Better late than never: The meaning of this advice is that to do something that is right, profitable, or good a little late is still better than not doing it at all.

In Vietnamese: *Ăn có chừng, chơi có độ, Ăn theo thưởng, ở theo thời, Trâu chậm uống nước đục...*

The idiom *Ăn có chừng, chơi có độ* recommends people to eat at pleasure, drink with measure so that they can have the most comfortable life.

2.2. Characteristics (15E + 12V)

+ Human characteristics:

In English: *There's one born every minute, Behind the times, I wasn't born yesterday, Sunday driver, See the light of day...*

There's one born every minute: People use this idiom to say about someone whom they think has been very stupid.

In Vietnamese: *Nói trước quên sau, Sớm đào tối hận...*

Sớm đào tối hận: “đào” (peach) and “hận” (plum) are two kinds of fruits. When we say someone “Sớm đào tối hận”, we mean that that person is philandering, flirtatious and is not faithful in love.

+ Characteristics of objects:

In English: *Different as night and day, Be as clear/plain as day...*

Different as night and day: Night and day are totally different from each other. This idiom is used to express the obvious and total difference of something.

In Vietnamese: *Rõ như ban ngày, Tối như đêm ba mươi...*

Rõ như ban ngày: The day light is always the clearest light. So when something is called “*Rõ như ban ngày*”, it is really clear and easy to see or understand without a shadow of doubt.

2.3. Frequency (6E + 3V)

In English: *By day and by night, Day in and day out/day in, day out, In a coon's age/in a month of Sundays...*

If you say that something will not happen *in a month of Sundays*, you mean that it is not likely to happen “*He'll never run the marathon, not in a month of Sundays*”.

In Vietnamese: *Buổi đực buổi cái, Năm thì mười họa...*

If you do something “*Buổi đực buổi cái*”, you do it irregularly/not often. Just someday do and someday quit.

2.4. Activities (23E + 25V)

In English: *Burn the midnight oil, Burning daylight, Call time, Seize the day, Name the day, Save (something) for a rainy day...*

When someone is *Burning daylight*, he/she is wasting his/her time. “*Don't play computer games. You are burning daylight*”.

In Vietnamese: *Chạy đua với thời gian, Ngủ ngày cà đêm, Đầu năm mua muối, cuối năm mua vôi...*

The idiom “*Chạy đua với thời gian*” has an equivalent idiom in English which is “*a race against time*”. If someone is in a race against time, they have to work very quickly in order to do or finish something before a certain time.

2.5. Mood (15E + 5V)

In English: *Be full of the joys of spring, Have a face like a wet weekend/have a face as long as a wet week, Merry as the day is long, Take your time, There aren't enough hours in the day...*

Be full of the joys of spring: Spring is the most beautiful and nice season in a year. *Be full of the joys of spring* means that you are having the intense and especially ecstatic or exultant happiness.

In Vietnamese: *Buồn như hoa bí buổi chiều, Len lén như chuột ngày...*

The flowers of pumpkin are usually withered in the late afternoon. If you are “*Buồn như hoa bí buổi chiều*”, you are having the feeling of unhappiness.

2.6. Objects (10E + 4V)

In English: *A blast from the past, Order of the day, Saturday night special, Sunday best...*

Sunday best: One's best and often most formal clothing. Its origin is from the practice among Christians of wearing one's best clothing to attend church on Sundays (indeed, an older idiom is Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes (meeting here meaning "prayer meeting").

In Vietnamese: *Xuân thu nhị kỳ*...

Xuân thu nhị kỳ denotes the ordinary thing which happens as usual.

2.7. Opinion (9E + 15V)

In English: *Every dog has its day, It'll be a cold day in hell /It'll be a long day in January, One swallow doesn't make a summer, The time is ripe, A dog's life...*

When you say that "*The time is ripe*", you mean that it's a suitable point for a particular activity. "*I'm waiting till the time is ripe before I tell my parents that I failed the exam.*"

In Vietnamese: *Sông có khúc, người có lúc, Ai giàu ba họ, ai khó ba đời...*

Sông có khúc, người có lúc: Everyday is not Saturday, everything can be changed without expectation and prediction.

2.8. Physical state (9E + 2V)

In English: *Be no spring chicken, Getting on in years, Of mature years...*

In Vietnamese: *Ba ngày béo bảy ngày gầy*

2.9. Time (20E + 10V)

+ *Time moment*:

In English: *Serve time, A red-letter day, Come Monday, Crunch time...*

"*A red-letter*" day is a one of good luck, when something special happens to you

In Vietnamese: *Năm xung tháng hạn ...*

The idiom "*Năm xung tháng hạn*" refers to a period of unlucky time when everything happens bad with you.

+ *Time period*:

In English: *Donkey's years, From here till next Tuesday, The New York minute, A split second...*

From here till next Tuesday means a very long period of time.

In Vietnamese: *Ba năm chín tháng mười ngày...*

+ *Time point:*

In English: *The other day (Recently), Yesterday wouldn't be too soon (immediately), Ahead of time (before)...*

2.10. Weather (3E + 1V)

In English: *An Indian summer, The dead of winter, The dog days of summer...*

“*An Indian summer*” has two meanings: 1, A period of mild weather occurring in late autumn.

2, A pleasant, tranquil, or flourishing period occurring near the end of something: “*the Indian summer of the administration.*”

In Vietnamese: *Mùa đông tháng giá:* Months of winter when it is very cold.

Semantic features	English IT		Vietnamese IT	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>Advice</i>	3	3 %	13	15 %
<i>Characteristics</i>	15	13%	12	13 %
<i>Frequency</i>	6	5 %	3	3 %
<i>Activities</i>	23	20 %	25	28 %
<i>Mood</i>	15	13 %	5	6 %
<i>Objects</i>	10	9 %	4	4 %
<i>Opinion</i>	9	8 %	15	17 %
<i>Physical state</i>	9	8 %	2	2 %
<i>Time</i>	20	18 %	10	11 %
<i>Weather</i>	3	3 %	1	1 %
<i>Total</i>	113	100 %	90	100 %

Table 2: Statistical analyze of semantic features of English and Vietnamese IT

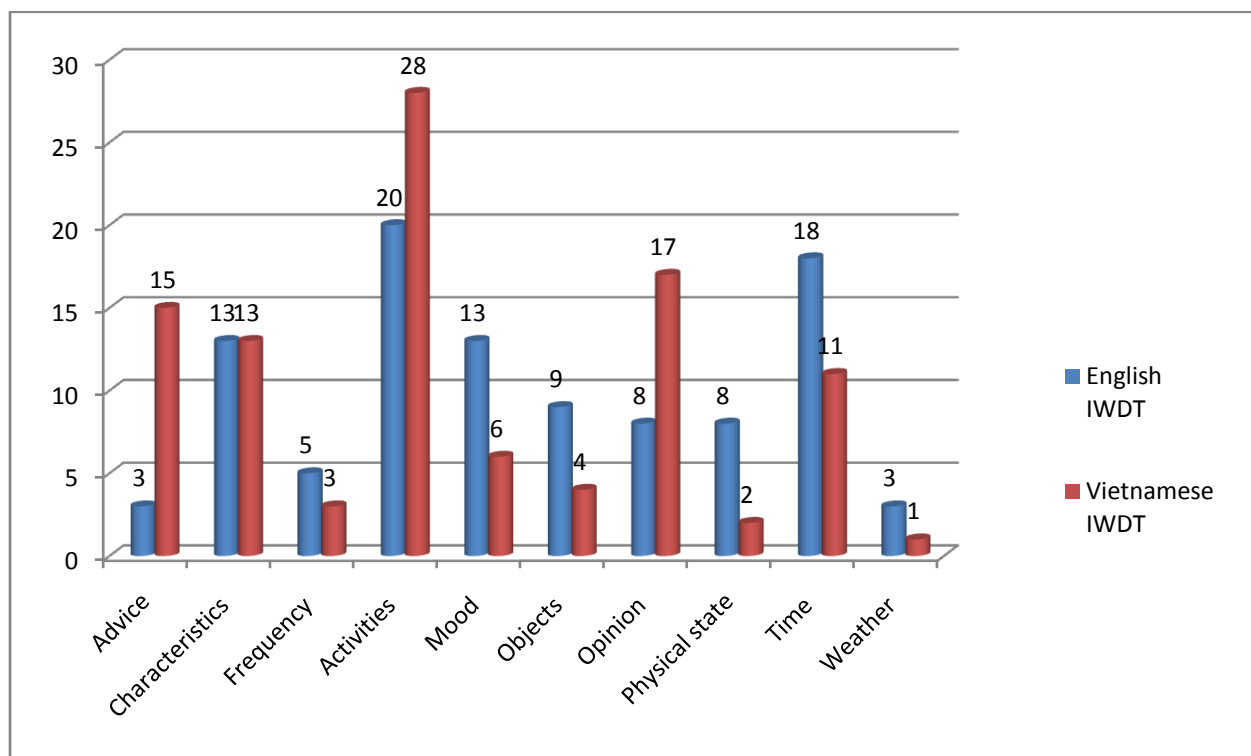


Chart 2: Rate of semantic features of English and Vietnamese IT

2.11. Similarities and Differences of Semantic Features of English and Vietnamese Idioms which contain Words Denoting Time

a. Similarities

Language is considered as a system of communicating among people who use sounds, symbols and words in expressing a meaning, idea or thought. This language can be used in many forms, primarily through oral and written communications as well as using expressions through body language.

Moreover, language is considered as a way to communicate ideas comprehensibly from one person to another in such a way that the other will be able to act exactly accordingly. And idiom is one of the exciting and popular language phenomenons. Therefore, to learn a language, a person needs to learn the words in that language, and how and when to use them. But people also need to learn idioms separately. And idioms reflect accumulated human experiences and are built on frequently occurring situations that demonstrate human behavior, social traits, certain habits or tradition in a country.

The use of idioms and phrasal verbs is commonplace and it can be extremely frustrating to find yourself understanding a conversation or a

business negotiation in English to only find yourself flummoxed when a few idioms are introduced into the conversation.

Both English and Vietnamese idioms containing words denoting time are employed for the same ten topics such as Advice, Characteristics (Human characteristics and characteristics of objects), Frequency, Activities, Mood, Objects, Opinion, Physical state, Time, Weather. However, the classification of all English and Vietnamese IT to semantic fields is not an easy task.

From my study, both English and Vietnamese idioms containing words denoting time use some certain, characters, things, concrete events to reveal or illustrate abstract idea or phenomena by the means of metaphor, hyperbole and simile.

As the data in the above table showed, we can refer that English and Vietnamese IT have the same rate of Characteristics fields in which its percentage is 13 %. The IT which has the semantic meaning of showing characteristic of human and objects as well accounts for a medium number in the total of investigated idioms.

The second agreement of English and Vietnamese IT is the approximately equal rate of idioms denoting frequency and weather (in detailed: English IT's rate is 5 % and 3 % and Vietnamese one's is 3 % and 1 % respectively). The possible reason is that the IT does not have a preference in showing the meaning of frequency and weather which need words belonging to other fields to express.

b. Differences

The above table reveals some differences between English and Vietnamese IT.

There are some differences in forming idioms and the way idioms conveying their meanings which closely relate to differences in the customs and habits of two countries.

From the above table, the biggest dissimilarity is the rate of Advice topic between English and Vietnamese IT. If there is only 3 % of English idioms which contain words denoting time belong to the topic of Advice, that number of Vietnamese ones is five times much (15 %). This difference is mainly caused by the way of expressing of the two countries' culture. If Vietnamese people like to use idioms to transfer some advice and experience

to the readers, English people don't. They are preferred to utilize IT to point out the objects and mood which can be seen from their higher rate over Vietnamese ones in the above table (13 % and 9 %).

What's more, Vietnamese four - word idioms with flexible parallel structures can help us memorize easily whereas English idioms do not have this structure. For example: *Ngày nhớ đêm mong...*

Some idioms may have more than one field, so it is difficult to define which field they tend to belong to. Therefore, we have to put them in the particular contexts where idioms come up. This helps us decide semantic field of which the idioms belong to.

3. Difficulties students encounter when learning idioms

3.1. Idioms are not literal

They do not mean what they say. The meaning idioms convey is non-compositional. It implies that you cannot understand the meaning of the whole phrase putting the meanings of each word together. If you look at the individual words, it may not even make sense grammatically. Idiom has the meaning only as a unit.

3.2. It's difficult to use idioms correctively

To use idioms correctly and appropriately takes many years of experience with the language. An inappropriately-used or incorrectly-used idiom will simply draw attention to the fact that the speaker is not a native speaker. This is unfortunate since the ultimate goal of most learners of English to reach a level of language indistinguishable from that of the native speaker.

Even when learners do master the meanings of some English idioms, it is still very difficult to learn to use them correctly. Idioms vary in formality from slang and colloquialisms to those which can be used in formal situations.

3.3. Teaching materials are not much available

Another reason why second-language learners do not learn idioms is that many second-language teaching materials either ignore idioms entirely or relegate them to the 'other expressions' section of vocabulary lists, without providing exercises or other aids to learning. Typically, an idiom will appear in the introductory reading or dialogue, a definition, translation or example will be provided in the margin or notes, and the idiom will then appear again

in the vocabulary list. These are obviously not sufficient aids to learning, unless the teacher provides additional exercises and practice.

4. Some suggested solutions

4.1. Learn idioms in context, never in isolation

You must ensure that you not only understand idioms, but also learn to use them, present idiom examples in context, for example, in simple conversations where the meaning of the idiom is clear.

If you see an idiom in context i.e., in a magazine, newspaper or a book, try to understand the context and this will help you with the idiom. *For example: my boss was really angry: shouting and screaming until he tripped and fell over the table. Everyone laughed and I couldn't keep a straight face.*

4.2. Create conversations using idioms

Remember that the goal is to not only understand idioms, but also learn how to use them effectively. Find a partner to make a pair. Then each of you must write a conversation and use this idiom in it.

Use the idioms you have learnt in everyday life. Should you be in a certain situation then don't be afraid to use one either in writing or in speaking.

4.3. Keep an 'Idioms' diary

Every time you hear an idiom or read one, write it down but then make sure that you can look it up at home in a dictionary (English dictionary for learners) and to write it in a sentence otherwise you will forget the meaning.

4.4. Amount: Not Too Many At Once

Planning to learn a big amount of idioms at once may not be the best approach to memorize them. Idioms are complex and difficult not only to understand but also to explain so consider introducing only a small number, maybe three to five, at a time. This approach will give you enough time to cover them thoroughly and have sufficient practice time without being overwhelmed.

4.5. A lot of idioms can be found in songs

If you can download the lyrics, have a look at the words and find the idioms – *remember an idiom does not make sense if you translate every word but more that you see it as a whole expression.*

4.6. Themes: Related To Your Topic

You can include idioms in your studying by learning them thematically. If they are related to the topic you are studying, you will have an easier time remembering them and will be familiar with the vocabulary you are using. When studying about pets, for instance, you can learn idioms such as “*work like a dog*” and “*dog tired*” which are related to the topic and will have something to discuss. What makes idioms so interesting is that they are a *unique combination of words that have completely different meanings from the individual words themselves*.

4.7. Try to see the idiom in your mind

Can you *see* the image? Many idioms are made of images. Try to imagine them and this will help you remember them by seeing the pictures in your mind.

Remember, practice makes perfect! Let’s try your best to learn idioms and you will reach your goal.

PART III: CONCLUSION

1. Summary of the study

As referred in previous parts, according to Jenifer Seidl and W.Mc Mordie in “*English Idiom and How to Use*” “an idiom is a number of words which, taken together, mean something different from the individual words of the idiom when they stand alone.” (1979: page 20)The *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* regards an idiom as “an expression which function as a single unit and whose meaning cannot be worked out from its separate parts” (1992: page 198). The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford University Press - 1995) defines idiom as “a phrase or sentence whose meaning is not clear from the meaning of its individual words and which must be learnt as a whole unit.” (1995: page 67).

On reflection, it could be seen that there is no conflict among the mentioned definitions of idiom. Regardless of obvious differences in expressing, they intersect at one point: *an idiom is a fixed expression whose meaning cannot be worked out by combining the literal meaning of its individual words.*

Learning idioms plays an important part in advancing language skill. Many students have much difficulty in describing their own ideas and feel that they can’t speak fluently or write a complete essay. This happens because they all rely on using separate words leading to make such “fragment” or “run-on” sentences.

Therefore, in order to be confident in using foreign language, to understand and use idioms in right way would be good choice for those who have strong desire to advance their level of English.

However, learning idioms could cause a lot of obstacles because of culture differences and other facts.

My graduation thesis namely “*A study on English and Vietnamese idioms which contain words denoting time*” involves the contrastive study of the syntactic and semantic features of idioms containing words denoting time in English and Vietnamese. By doing this, I find out the various meanings as well as the constructions possessed by IT the ways it is used properly in both languages.

In brief, there are three main parts in my study: Part one is entitled the “*Introduction*” where rationale, aim, scope and design of the thesis are presented. Part two is the “*Development*” which consists of three chapters: Chapter one is Theoretical Background, including four main small parts. Chapter two includes methodology and procedure. Chapter three is composed of finding and discussion. Finally, Part three is the “*Conclusion*” summarizing what have been discussed in previous parts.

In terms of syntactic features, English and Vietnamese IT are divided into seven categories of Noun phrase, Verb phrase, Adj phrase, Prep phrase, Adv phrase, Sentence structure and Parallel structure.

From the above chart, what we can see is the obvious domination of Verb phrase in the total rate of syntactic features in English idioms. It has the highest percentage of 32%. Standing at the second place is the approximate number of Noun phrase with 30%. Prep phrase and Sentence structure account for 10% and 11% respectively. Adj and Adv phrase have the same percentage of 6%. And the lowest rate belongs to Parallel structure with only 3%.

Nearly in contrast with English IT, Vietnamese idioms show their little attention to Prep phrase with only 1%. Adj, Sentence and Parallel structure account for the proximate rate of 15%, 16% and 14% respectively. 9% is the common percentage of Noun and Adv Phrase. Syntactically, Vietnamese idioms only agree with English ones in case of Verb phrase in which its rate is extremely high at 36%.

However, English and Vietnamese languages are obvious different from each other in terms of parallel structure and Noun phrase. The high number of Vietnamese parallel (14%) over English ones (3%) shows the preference of Vietnamese people on utilizing parallel structure with alliteration and rhythm in order to make speeches smoother and easier to remember. Whereas, English people like to use Noun phrase in expressing their idioms, evidence is the considerably high percentage of Noun phrase with 30% when that number of Vietnamese IT is only 9%.

In terms of semantic features, all idioms in the corpus are categorized into 10 sub-fields including Advice, Characteristics (Human characteristics

and characteristics of objects), Frequency, Activities, Mood, Objects, Opinion, Physical state, Time, Weather.

The Activities sub-field dominates in Vietnamese with 28%. The first runner-up is Opinion with 17% and the second one is Advice with 15%. Weather, Physical state and Frequency sub-categories are paid little attention with respective percentages of 1%, 2% and 3%.

In case of English IT, Activities also gets the highest place with 20%. The proximate number of 18% belongs to Time sub-filed. Advice and Weather are located at the lowest rate of 3%.

Among these groups, Activities category is the most popular part for both the Vietnamese and English idioms with 28% in Vietnamese and 20% in English. The possible explanation for this agreement is that idioms containing words denoting time share much care on expressing the activities of both human being and others animals. Via these activities, idioms show the experience and lessons which the senior generations hope to transfer to their off springs.

Advice sub-field reveals the most different factor between English and Vietnamese IT. If that category accounts for 15% in Vietnamese language, its percentage in English is only 3%. The idea of Advice should be a preference in showing meaning of Vietnamese idioms.

2. Limitation of the study

Despite my considerable efforts, certain limitations could be detected in this study due to time constraint and other unexpected factors. That is the number of IT between English idioms and Vietnamese equivalents in the study remained relatively low in comparison with the enormous number of English and Vietnamese idioms. However, I hope that the serious work had well served the research questions as a contribution to the rich collection of other previous studies on the same area.

Due to the limitation of my knowledge as well as time my research stops here but I expect that it will be profoundly analyzed more by following people who are interested in idioms which contain words denoting time.

3. Suggestions for further studies

Some suggestions for further studies to people who are interested in topics related to mine:

- A study on culture features of English and Vietnamese idioms which contain words denoting time.
- A study on English and Vietnamese idioms denoting time.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF ENGLISH IT

No.	English IT	Meaning	Example
1	A black day	A day when something very unpleasant or sad happens	<i>A bomb went off early this morning. This is a black day for the peace process</i>
2	A blast from the past	A memory from your past, or something that causes you to remember something	<i>He came to me as a blast from the past</i>
3	A dirty weekend	A weekend when two people who are not married go away somewhere to have sex	<i>At first I thought he was asking me to go away for a dirty weekend</i>
4	A dog's life	A life of misery	<i>His life is just a dog's life</i>
5	A girl/man/person Friday	A person who does many different types of usually not very interesting work in an office	<i>She is a girl Friday who assists me with office work</i>
6	A Monday morning quarterback	Someone who says how an event or problem should have been dealt with, after other people have already dealt with it	<i>It's easy to be a Monday morning quarterback when you see the kids' low test scores, but there are no easy answers to improving education</i>
7	A race against time	Have to do something fast within a deadline	<i>There's a race against time to save the rainforests</i>
8	A red-letter day	A day that is very important or very special	<i>The day our daughter was born was a real red-letter day for us</i>
9	A split second	very short time	<i>In a split second, the cat twisted and landed on its</i>

			<i>feet</i>
10	Abreast the times	updated, up-to-date	<i>She always tries to keep abreast the times</i>
11	Ahead of time	Before	<i>The house was completed ahead of time</i>
12	All in a day's work	Part of what is expected; typical or normal	<i>I don't particularly like to cook, but it's all in a day's work</i>
13	All the livelong day	All day long.	<i>Well, of course you get to feeling stiff, sitting in front of a computer all the livelong day.</i>
14	An apple a day keeps the doctor away	Eating an apple every day will keep you healthy	<i>My mother always feeds us many apples. She believes that "An apple a day keeps the doctor away"</i>
15	An Indian summer	Warm sunny weather in autumn, when it would usually be colder	<i>We are having a nice weather in this autumn, it's an Indian summer.</i>
16	Bad hair day	If you're having a bad hair day, things are not going the way you would like or had planned	<i>He didn't come as I expected, it's just a bad hair day</i>
17	Be as clear/plain as day	To be obvious or easy to see	<i>She's in love with him - it's as plain as day</i>
18	Be as honest as the day (is long)	To be completely honest	<i>You can be as honest as the day is long and still get into trouble if you fill in your tax form incorrectly</i>
19	Be full of the joys	To be very happy	<i>He bounced into the</i>

	of spring		<i>office, full of the joys of spring</i>
20	Be light years away	To be a very long time in the future	<i>A cure for all kinds of cancer is still light years away</i>
21	Be no spring chicken	To not be young any more	<i>He must be ten years older than Grace, and she's no spring chicken</i>
22	Behind the times	Someone that is behind the times is old-fashioned and has ideas that are regarded as out-dated	<i>He is behind the times. He even doesn't know how to use computer</i>
23	Better late than never	It implies that a belated achievement is better than not reaching a goal at all.	<i>The achievement is long overdue, but it's better late than never</i>
24	Burn the midnight oil	If you stay up very late working or studying, you burn the midnight oil	<i>The exam is approaching and most of us must burn the midnight oil.</i>
25	Burning daylight	Wasting time	<i>You are really burning daylight.</i>
26	By day and by night	During the day; during the night. (Often used in simultaneous clauses for contrast)	<i>By day, Mary worked in an office; by night, she took classes. Dave slept by day and worked by night</i>
27	Call time	If you call time on something, you decide it is time to end it	<i>The day is over. Let call time on our work.</i>
28	Carry the day	- To win a war or a fight If you carry the day, you persuade people to	<i>- At the beginning of the American Civil War, many southerners</i>

		support your ideas or opinions, or if a particular idea carries the day, it is accepted by a group of people	<i>believed their soldiers and statesmen would carry the day</i> - <i>The Republicans carried the day in the dispute over the new jet fighter. Her argument in favor of pay increases eventually carried the day</i>
29	Come Monday	When Monday comes (Can be used with other expressions for time, as in <i>come next week, come December, come five o'clock.</i>)	<i>You may think that putting up storm windows is a bother, but come December, you'll be glad you did it</i>
30	Come/spring to mind	If someone or something springs to mind, you immediately think of them	<i>I'm trying to think of someone who might help out with the kids. Yvette comes to mind. '</i>
31	Crunch time	When people, companies, etc, have to make an important decision that will have a considerable effect on their future, it is crunch time	<i>This crunch time will mark the new page of our life.</i>
32	Daydream	A dreamlike musing or fantasy while awake, especially of the fulfillment of wishes or hopes	<i>Well, when I wake up, I get up right away - no time to have daydream anymore!</i>
33	Day in and day	On every day; for each	<i>She watches soap operas</i>

	out/day in, day out	day	<i>day in and day out</i>
34	Day of reckoning	A time when something must be dealt with	<i>Taking out another loan to cover your debts will only postpone the day of reckoning</i>
35	Day one	The very beginning; the very first day	<i>You haven't done anything right since day one! You're fired!</i>
36	Day person	A person who prefers to be active during the daytime. (Compare this with a night person.)	<i>I am strictly a day person</i>
37	Daylight robbery	If you are overcharged or underpaid, it is a daylight robbery; open, unfair and hard to prevent	<i>This tax rate is so high but we must obey. This is exactly a daylight robbery.</i>
38	Day-tripper	A tourist who makes excursions lasting just one day	<i>Being a day-tripper is hard on your feet sometimes</i>
39	Different as night and day	Completely different	<i>Although Bobby and Billy are twins, they are as different as night and day</i>
40	Donkey's years	A very long time	<i>I've been doing this job for donkey's years</i>
41	Every dog has its day	Something that you say which means that everyone is successful during some period in their life	<i>He'll get that promotion eventually. Every dog has its day</i>
42	First see the light of day	- To be born - To come into being	<i>- My grandfather has taken care of me since I first saw the light of day</i>

			- <i>Bob's collection of short stories first saw the light of day in a privately printed edition three years ago</i>
43	From here till next Tuesday	For a great distance; for a long time	<i>If you try that again, I'll knock you from here till next Tuesday</i>
44	Get/have your day in court	To get an opportunity to give your opinion on something or to explain your actions after they have been criticized	<i>She was fiercely determined to get her day in court and the TV interview would give it to her</i>
45	Getting on in years	Becoming old	<i>She's getting on in years, but she's healthy</i>
46	Great day (in the morning)!	(My goodness! (An exclamation of surprise.)	<i>Great day in the morning! I didn't expect to see you here</i>
47	Have a face like a wet weekend/have a face as long as a wet week	To look very unhappy	<i>He's had a face like a wet weekend all day</i>
48	Have a field day	To experience freedom from one's usual work schedule; to have a very enjoyable time. (As with children who are released from classes to take part in sports and athletic contests.)	<i>The boss was gone and we had a field day today. No one got anything done. The air was fresh and clear and everyone had a field day in the park during the lunch hour</i>
49	Have all the time in the world	Have plenty of time	<i>You don't need to hurry. We've got all the time in the world</i>

50	Have time of your life	You're enjoying an unforgettable, exhilarating experience that cannot be recreated	<i>I cannot forget this moment, I am really having time of my life</i>
51	Have time on your hands/time to kill	Too much time	<i>We've got a bit of time on our hands. What do you want to do?</i>
52	Haven't got all day	Please hurry; I'm in a hurry	<i>Rachel: make it snappy! I haven't got all day. Alice: just take it easy. There's no rush. Henry: I haven't got all day.</i>
53	I wasn't born yesterday	Experienced; knowledgeable in the ways of the world	<i>I know what's going on. I wasn't born yesterday. Sally knows the score. She wasn't born yesterday</i>
54	In a coon's age/in a month of Sundays	In a very long time (The <i>coon</i> is a <i>raccoon</i> .)	<i>How are you? I haven't seen you in a coon's age</i>
55	In an age of years	In a long time	<i>Jane hasn't ridden a horse in an age of years</i>
56	In broad daylight	When something occurs in broad daylight, it means the event is clearly visible	<i>Two coyotes brazenly walked across the lawn in broad daylight</i>
57	In the cold light of day	If you see things in the cold light of day, you see them as they really are, not as you might want them to be	<i>It was the fact; I saw it in the cold light of day.</i>
58	In this day and age/(in) this day	Now	<i>In this day and age you must have computer skills</i>

	and time		<i>if you want to get a job</i>
59	In years	For a very long time	<i>The February issue of the magazine is easily its best in years</i>
60	It'll be a cold day in hell /It'll be a long day in January	(When something happens). Something will never happen or is highly unlikely	<i>It'll be a cold day in Hell when the city council agrees on where to build that bridge</i>
61	Just another day/Just another day's work	An ordinary or typical event	<i>It was just another day of arguing with my teenage son</i>
62	Know as much about something as a hog knows about Sunday	To have no knowledge of something	<i>Don't let Jim make dessert for the picnic. He knows as much about pies as a hog knows about Sunday</i>
63	Late in the day	Delayed almost too long	<i>Isn't it rather late in the day to say you're sorry?</i>
64	Living on borrowed time	Following an illness or near-death experience, many people believe they have cheated death	<i>After Jim was struck by lightning, he felt like he was living on borrowed time</i>
65	Make good time	Do something faster than you thought	<i>We made good time. It only took us an hour to get here</i>
66	Make somebody's day	To make someone very happy	<i>Go on, tell him you like his jacket. It'll make his day!</i>
67	Merry as the day is long	Very happy and carefree	<i>Mary is as merry as a cricket whenever she has company come to call. The little children are as merry as the day is long.</i>
68	Name the day	To announce when you	<i>Have you and Chris</i>

		plan to do something important, especially get married	<i>named the day yet?</i>
69	Need something yesterday	To require something in a very big hurry	<i>Yes, I'm in a hurry! I need it yesterday!</i>
70	Not give anyone the time of day	To ignore someone (usually out of dislike)	<i>Mary won't speak to Sally. She won't give her the time of day.</i>
71	Not one's day	A bad day one of those days	<i>I missed my train and forgot my glasses - I guess it's just not my day</i>
72	Of mature years	Old	<i>My employer is a man of mature years. The professor, a woman of mature years, is planning to retire at the end of the school term</i>
73	On the Spur of the Moment	Denotes a spontaneous or sudden undertaking	<i>Linda and Louis drove to the beach on the spur of the moment</i>
74	One day/some day	In the future	<i>I'd like to go to Mexico one day</i>
75	One swallow doesn't make a summer	Something that you say which means because one good thing has happened, you cannot therefore be certain that more good things will happen and the whole situation will improve	<i>Okay, they won their last game but one swallow doesn't make a summer. They're still bottom of the league</i>
76	One's sunset years	One's old age	<i>Many people in their sunset years love to travel</i>
77	Order of the day	Something necessary or	<i>Warm clothes are the</i>

		usual at a certain time	<i>order of the day when camping in the winter</i>
78	Other times, other manner	Different generations or eras have different customs	<i>Amy thought her grandchildren addressed their friends in startlingly rude terms. "But then," she reflected, "other times, other manners."</i>
79	Pass the time of day (with someone)	To chat or talk informally with someone	<i>I saw Mr. Brown in town yesterday. I stopped and passed the time of day with him</i>
80	Pressed for time	Not have much time	<i>I'm a bit pressed for time at the moment. Do you mind if we have the meeting tomorrow?</i>
81	Put years on somebody	To make someone look or feel much older	<i>The breakup of his marriage put years on him</i>
82	Saturday night special	A small, easily obtainable pistol	<i>There was another killing last night with a Saturday night special</i>
83	Save the day	To produce a good result when a bad result was expected	<i>The team was expected to lose, but Sally made three points and saved the day</i>
84	Save (something) for a rainy day	To keep an amount of money for a time in the future when it might be needed	<i>She has a couple of thousand pounds kept aside which she's saving for a rainy day</i>
85	See the light of day	To be made available or be known about	<i>The company agreed the ad was an embarrassment and promised it would never again see the light of day</i>

86	Seize the day	To use an opportunity to do something that you want and not to worry about the future	<i>Seize the day, young man. You may never get the chance to embark on such an adventure again</i>
87	Serve time	To spend a certain amount of time in jail	<i>After the felon served his time, he was released from prison</i>
88	Spring into action	To suddenly begin moving or doing something	<i>As soon as the boss came in the door, everyone sprang into action</i>
89	Spring to attention	To move quickly to assume the military posture of attention	<i>The recruit sprang to attention</i>
90	Spring to one's feet	To stand up quickly	<i>He sprang to his feet and demanded that the chair recognize him</i>
91	Spring to someone's defense	To go quickly to defend someone. (Can be against physical or verbal attack.)	<i>Fred was attacked and Ralph sprang to his defense.</i>
92	Spring up	To appear or develop suddenly; to sprout, as with a seedling	<i>The dog's ears sprang up when the refrigerator opened</i>
93	Spring something on someone	- To surprise someone with something - Pull a trick on someone	<i>- I hate to spring this on you at the last moment, but I will need some money to travel on. - Let me tell you about the trick I sprang on Sally</i>
94	Sunday best	One's best clothing, which one would wear to church	<i>We are in our Sunday best, ready to go</i>
95	Sunday driver	A slow and leisurely	<i>I'm a Sunday driver, and</i>

		driver who appears to be sightseeing and enjoying the view, holding up traffic in the process.	<i>I'm sorry. I just can't bear to go faster.</i>
96	Take years off (of) someone or something	To make someone seem or look younger	<i>My exciting vacation took years off of me.</i>
97	Take your time	Not be in any hurry	<i>Take your time answering the question</i>
98	That'll be the day	It will never happen	<i>A raise in pay? That'll be the day!</i>
99	The big time	- Of extreme severity - It can also mean to reach the top of one's profession	- <i>Johnnie knew he was going to be in big-time trouble</i> - <i>When he landed the position as vice president, he knew he had reached the big time</i>
100	The dead of winter	Middle of winter, when it is very cold and dark	<i>Shouldn't go out for vacation in the dead of winter</i>
101	The dog days of summer	Those hottest, dampest, worst days of a hot summer	<i>I hate the dog days of summer, I always go to the lake then</i>
102	The New York minute	A very short period of time which passes so quickly that we can't even notice it	<i>Go on a date with Viggo? I'd do that in a New York minute</i>
103	The other day	Recently Usage notes: also used in the forms <i>the other night</i> and <i>the other week</i>	<i>She phoned me just the other day</i> <i>I saw him the other night</i>

104	The time is ripe	When the time is ripe, it's advantageous to undertake plans that have been waiting for awhile	<i>Time is ripe, we should start our plan</i>
105	There aren't enough hours in the day	There are too many things to do and not enough time	<i>I am behind in all my work. There aren't enough hours in the day!</i>
106	There's one born every minute	Something that you say about someone who you think has been very stupid	<i>'He left a window open and then wondered why he'd been burgled!' 'There's one born every minute, isn't there?'</i>
107	Time is money	If time is going to waste, money isn't being made	<i>Remember, time is money, shouldn't waste it</i>
108	Time is on your side	Be young and have plenty of time ahead of you	<i>You've got time on your side, so you shouldn't feel pressured into making a career decision now</i>
109	Time to call it a day	It's time to quit for the day	<i>Jane: Well, I'm done. Time to call it a day. Sue: Yes, let's get out of here</i>
110	Twilight years	The last years before death	<i>In his twilight years, he became more mellow and stopped yelling at people</i>
111	Up in years/advanced in years/along in years/on in years	Old; elderly	<i>My uncle is up in years and can't hear too well</i>
112	Year in, year out	Year after year; for years	<i>I seem to have hay fever year in, year out. I never get over it.</i>

113	Yesterday wouldn't be too soon	Immediately; Right away (An answer to the question "When do you want this?")	<i>Mary: Mr. Franklin, when do you want this? Fred: Well, yesterday wouldn't be too soon.</i>
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APPENDIX 2: LIST OF VIETNAMESE IT

No.	Vietnamese IT	Meaning/Equivalent expression in English
1	Ai giàu ba họ, ai khó ba đời	Every dog has its day/Fortune knocks once at least at every man's door/One cannot be always fortunate
2	Ăn bữa hôm lo bữa mai	Live from hand to mouth
3	Ăn bữa sáng lo bữa tối	Make both ends meet
4	Ăn cắp quen tay ngủ ngày quen mắt	Once a thief, always a thief/ Once a liar always a liar
5	Ăn có chừng, chơi có độ	Eat at pleasure, drink with measure/ diseases are the interest of pleasures.
6	Ăn cỗ đi trước, lội nước theo sau	He that comes first to the hill may sit where he will/an early riser is sure to be in luck/the early bird catches the worm
7	Ăn có giờ, làm có buổi	Without time off from work, a person becomes both bored and boring/ To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven
8	Ăn cơm chúa mùa tối ngày	Get paid from somebody and work for them
9	Ăn đời ở kiếp	Spend the rest of one's life
10	Ăn theo thuở, ở theo thời	Manner changes with the time/one must live according to his means
11	Áo bào gặp ngày hội	Meet with a favorable opportunity
12	Áo đon đợi hè	Wait for chance to develop
13	Áo gấm đi đêm	Cast pearl before swine
14	Ba lần đo, một lần cắt	Measure thrice and cut once
15	Ba năm chín tháng mười ngày	For a very long time
16	Ba ngày béo bảy ngày gầy	Something which does not maintain the stability/change irregularly
17	Bách niên giai lão	Live to be a hundred (together)

18	Bảy ngày ba bão biết cây cứng mềm	Difficulty helps judge one's strength
19	Buổi đực buổi cái	Day on and day off/Not often
20	Buổi tối nghĩ sai, sáng mai nghĩ đúng	It's always easier to think in the morning/an hour in the morning is worth two in the evening
21	Buồn như hoa bí buổi chiều	One is bored stiff
22	Càng mong lại càng lâu	A watched pot never boils
23	Chậm mà chắc	Slow but sure, slow and steady wins the race
24	Chậm như sên	Crawl along/creep at a snail's pace
25	Chẳng chóng thì chày	Sooner or later
26	Chạy đua với thời gian	A race against time
27	Chó dại có mùa, người dại quanh năm	An ass will always be an ass/ he who is born a fool is never cured
28	Chơi xuân kéo hết xuân đi	You are only young once
29	Có công mài sắt có ngày nên kim	Nothing is impossible to a willing heart/where there's a will, there's a way
30	Cóc chết ba năm quay đầu về núi	East or west, home is the best
31	Dăm bữa nửa tháng	To spend from five days to a fortnight
32	Đầu năm mua muối, cuối năm mua vôi	Do things which people believe to bring about the luck
33	Để quá khứ trôi vào dĩ vãng	Let bygones be bygones
34	Đêm dài lắm mộng	The problem which is not solved quickly which be much more difficult
35	Đi đêm lắm có ngày gặp ma	You can't always be lucky/the pot goes too often to the well but is broken at last
36	Đi trước về sau	To start earlier but finish later
37	Giàu chiều hôm, khó sớm mai	Everything can be changed quickly without expectation
38	Giữa ban ngày ban mặt	In broad daylight
39	Hoa có thời gái có thì	Everything is good in its season

40	Khôn ba năm đại một giờ	Penny wise and pound foolish
41	Kiểm củi ba năm thiêu một giờ	A year care, a minute ruin
42	Kiến tha lâu cũng có ngày đầy tổ	Many a little makes a micelle/little and often fill the purse
43	Lâu ngày dày kén	Patience in time, the grass becomes milk
44	Lâu ngày lá dâu thành lụa	With time and patience, the leaf of the mulberry becomes satin
45	Lấy đêm làm ngày	Turn night into day
46	Len lén như chuột ngày	To act in a stealthy manner
47	Len lén như rắn mùng năm	To act in a stealthy manner
48	Lửa gần rơm lâu ngày cũng bén	Straw near fire will catch sooner or later/first make friend, then make love
49	Mơ giữa ban ngày	Daydream
50	Mỗi giây dài tựa thiên thu	Every minute seem like a thousand
51	Mỗi thời, mỗi cách	Other time, other manners
52	Mong đêm mong ngày	Wait for long
53	Một sớm một chiều	Short time
54	Mùa đông tháng giá	Cold winters
55	Mùa hạ buồn bông, mùa đông buồn quạt	Work ineffectively and surely get the failure
56	Mưa lâu thấm đất	Small rain lays great dust
57	Năm cùng tháng tận	End of the year
58	Năm ngày ba tật	Person with many shortcomings
59	Năm thì mười họa	Once in a blue moon
60	Năm xung tháng hạn	Bad time for everything
61	Nay đợi mai trông	Always wait and look forward to something/someone
62	Nay gánh mai đội	Work busily and hard
63	Ngày ba tháng tám	Some day
64	Ngày rộng tháng dài	Have all the time in the world
65	Ngủ ngày cày đêm	Sleep by day and work by night
66	Nói trước bước không qua	Do not count your chicken before they are

		hatched/do not boast until you see the enemy dead
67	Nói trước quên sau	Have a memory/mind like a sieve
68	Rõ như ban ngày	As clear as the day
69	Sáng rửa cửa, trưa mài đục, tối giục nhau về	To dawdle in one's job
70	Sớm đào tối mặn	Be flirtatious
71	Sớm một ngày hay một chúc	Better early than late
72	Sông có khúc, người có lúc	A flow will have an ebb/there is a crook in the lot of everyone.
73	Sống lâu lên lão làng	An old fox not easily snared/ With age comes wisdom
74	Sống nay chết mai	One cannot predict the future
75	Tháng ba đau máu, tháng sáu đau lưng	Be unhealthy
76	Tháng đợi năm chờ	Wait and look forward to someone/something for long time
77	Thời gian chữa lành mọi vết thương	Time is the great healer
78	Thời gian có chờ đợi ai	Time and tide waits for no man
79	Thua keo trước được keo sau	Better luck next time
80	Thức đêm mới biết đêm dài	Judge not of man and things at first sight/you never know anyone till you've eaten a peck of salt with him.
81	Thức khuya dậy sớm	Work hard
82	Tối như đêm ba mươi	It is pitch-dark/As dark as midnight
83	Trâu chậm uống nước đục	Better early than late/ he who sleeps catches no fish
84	Trước có vụng rồi sau mới khéo	It is the first step that is troublesome
85	Trước sau như một	Always the same

86	Ủ rũ như điều hâu tháng chạp	Be unhappy
87	Việc hôm nay chớ để ngày mai	Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today/there is no time like the present
88	Xuân bất tái lai	One's spring time never returns
89	Xuân thu nhị kỳ	The ordinary thing which happens as usual
90	Yên giấc ngàn thu	Be dead and buried

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